From: Gordon Weast
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/25/01 9:26pm
Subject: Comments on Microsoft agreement

Sirs:

After reading much that has been written about the pending agreement,
I feel compelled to write.

At first look, forcing Microsoft to make $1B available to some
educational institutions looks like a punishment. Unfortunately,
this just locks out other products from those same markets. While
I saw reference to a Microsoft statement that those institutions
could spend money on other products, they clearly won't provide
customer support for such a choice.

Students who learn computers using a single provider's products
will likely think that that is the only option. How does this
promote competition?

An additional clause in the agreement that requires some specified
fraction of the funds to be used to teach alternative products both
on Windows and on other operating systems would do far more to help
level the playing field. At least 50% of the funds should be used
to promote the competition. This would go far to make up for the
anti-competitive tricks they have used to get where they are.

I don't want to see Microsoft destroyed, but it is important for
the industry that open competition be encouraged.

The discussions I have read indicate that while Microsoft would
be required to make the programming interfaces available, they
would not be freely available to all developers. Allowing
Microsoft to make the information available only under supervision
at a Microsoft site would lock out smaller developers who have
little or no budget for travel. These are the very developers
who will most likely take chances on new technology. Many
of these developers are likely working as single people with
no budget for travel to a Microsoft site.

Please don't let the agreement stand as it currently exists.
This agreement is not good for the software industry.

Gordon Weast